



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

MAR 3 2003

The Honorable John Conyers  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Conyers:

Thank you for the letter that you and your fellow Members of Congress wrote to the Attorney General in which you questioned actions regarding fiscal year (FY) 2003 grant funds for first responders. Unfortunately, the information you have received on this issue is in error.

The Department of Justice (DOJ), specifically the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), takes pride in the continuing support and assistance it provides to the nation's public safety community. Unfortunately, the failure of Congress to pass the DOJ's FY 2003 budget until the fifth month of the fiscal year left the Department and OJP operating under limited continuing resolutions. Absent a full-year appropriation, we could only speculate on the availability of resources for the remainder of FY 2003. If OJP had proceeded to obligate funding without an appropriation, the Antideficiency Act would have been violated. However, now that H. J. Res. 2, an omnibus spending bill for the remainder of the fiscal year, has become law, we will do everything we can to get those funds to the first responders, and other FY 2003 grantees, as soon as possible.

The Administration and the DOJ remain committed to providing the necessary resources to our nation's dedicated and courageous front line first responders. In the past twelve months, the President and DOJ have provided almost one billion dollars to first responders and continued, even under the constraints of operating under continuing resolutions, to fund first responder training and exercises. Our constraints related, not to funds already appropriated, but to the FY 2003 funds that had not yet been provided.

I hope this information is useful. Please do not hesitate to contact this office if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Jamie E. Brown  
Acting Assistant Attorney General